

CSC Project Proposal – 2020
Date submitted: December 1, 2019

Project Title: URI Land Conservation Seminar Course on Baseline Documents

Goal: Replicate the very successful class at URI that was taught in Spring 2016 and repeated in Fall 2018 Semester. This class:

- Complements the RI Land Trust Council's circuit rider program to help land trusts prepare baseline documents.
- Engages URI Natural Resource students in a concrete land conservation stewardship project that uses the skills and knowledge they have gained through classwork. This project exposes the students to real world contributions they can make to address land stewardship needs and connects them with Rhode Island's land conservation community.
- Engages and coach students in the production of a Baseline Documentation Report (BDR) for a local conservation group to help address the existing 'BDR backlog' in Rhode Island by creating baseline documents for 10-15 properties.
- Provide students with a tangible portfolio project that demonstrates their technical skills in an applied fashion.

Brief Description: Upper level undergraduate students in the Natural Resources Science Department at the University of Rhode Island have all of the content and technical skills required to create baseline documentation for local land conservation groups. They are well trained in flora, fauna, and environmental resource identification, have experience with GIS mapping, are technologically adept, and are passionate about contributing to the protection and restoration of natural systems. However, in most cases students lack exposure to the basic framework of land conservation transactions, are unaware of the stewardship needs facing the land conservation community, and are not currently engaged in local land conservation efforts.

This project conducts a seminar class for these students with instruction, coaching and oversight by an expert working in the field that enables them to prepare a baseline document report for a protected property. The students will finish the class with the knowledge and experience of preparing baseline documents. Students are each partnered with a land trust or other conservation organization to prepare a baseline document. This has resulted in students continuing to work with land trusts after the class.

CSC funding is needed to pay for the consultant who teaches the seminar, supervises the student's work and ensures quality control for the baseline documents being prepared. This project has a strong track record helping land trusts reduce the backlog of baseline documents needed for protected properties. It has a great cost efficiency for preparing baseline documents and increases the number of people in Rhode Island with expertise and experience preparing these important stewardship records.

Deliverables: The deliverables for this project are:

1. Develop and carry out a seminar class at URI, meeting once per week, with an anticipated enrollment of ~12-15 upper level undergraduate students and graduate students.
2. Guide students in the production of BDRs for properties protected by local land conservation groups with students individually or working in pairs preparing a BDR for a protected property. Anticipated completion of 10-15 BDRs.
3. A cohort of students who will be exposed to the stewardship needs of local land conservation groups and empowered to apply their skills in the future as interns, staff, volunteers, and board members.

Timetable and Benchmarks:

January - 2020 - Course preparations and networking with local land conservation groups to identify potential properties for inclusion

January - May 2020 - offered class during the spring semester.

Budget:

| Amount | Purpose |
|---------------|--|
| \$ 2,500 | Contract with Instructor to prepare course, network with land trusts to identify partners, select properties for student projects and gather documents |
| \$ 5,000 | Instructor course delivery, student oversight and coaching with BDR development |
| \$ 900 | Fiscal sponsor costs |

Total \$ 8,400

Land trusts make a \$250 cost share payment for each baseline document. The funding generated by these cost share payments will go toward the Director's time helping to coordinate the class, recruit and network with land trusts and administering the grant and consultant/instructor's contract.

University of Rhode Island is contributing in-kind class space and ARC-GIS licenses for the students, van transportation and may provide a teaching assistant.

Payments will be made to the fiscal agent for the project: TSNE MissionWorks. Contact Information is:

TSNE MissionWorks
89 South Street, Suite 700
Boston, MA 02111

Project oversight will be done by: Rupert Friday, Director, RI Land Trust Council